



# The reflection toolkit

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Looking back, reflecting, reviewing your task, your day and your week is an important skill for self-development and awareness.

The process of reflection can help us to make sense of our day-to-day experiences, it can help us to move forward, to come to decisions, to create a course of action, to challenge ourselves and our habitual ways of doing and thinking.

When we reflect we are our own teacher as self-reflection helps to bring consciousness to something we already know (at the unconscious level).

## Make reflective thinking a habit

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It's important to allocate at least 10-15 minutes for reflection a few times a week in an environment that supports you and away from your desk and computer, and when you're in a positive state of mind. Are you at your best in the morning or evening? When is your mind open and alert?

Reflection requires a number of skills which can easily be developed:

- **Self-awareness** – an ability to pause, to pay attention to thoughts and feelings and to self-question non-judgementally. This will help you to become aware of your habitual ways of thinking and behaving in any given situation.
- **Description** – it is important to be able to describe / recall situations neutrally. These questions can help:  
What did I see and feel happening? What other factors in the given circumstances played a role? What were the things under my control? How would other people involved describe me and the situation?
- **Critical analysis** – the ability to challenge your assumptions by asking yourself:  
Is what I am thinking about myself, others or the situation true? Where do I need to focus next?
- **Review** – an ability to pause and to ask:  
What would I do differently next time and why? How exactly will I do it? How will that help me achieve what I want?
- **Learning mindset vs failure mindset** – an ability to learn about yourself from experiences (your potential and areas for improvement) rather than seeing yourself or others as a failure. Ask yourself:  
What have I learnt about myself? What would I do differently next time? How can I use my skills and experience best? Where is my biggest area for improvement and change?

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Apply these tools for reflection to anything, big or small – they will add depth to how you live your life, making it more satisfying and meaningful as a result.

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# The reflection toolkit (contd.)

## Alternative reflection models

Here are four potential ways to reflect, depending on your preference.

- **Talking to yourself**

Having a conversation with yourself in the form of questions and answers.

- **Reflective writing**

When we write things down we support the process of reflection because when we write thoughts down, we 'objectify' them. Our thoughts are now on the page, ready and waiting to be referred back to. When we sit down to think, our thoughts can sometimes be elusive (see my free resource on Reflective Journaling)



Photo by Mehrad Vosoughi from Pexels

- **Reflective walking**

Reflecting while walking is powerful. I have my best ideas when I'm out and about – hence my 'coaching while walking' approach. When we walk our brain waves slow down, clearing the mind for fresh thinking and ideas. Many well-known thinkers recommend reflecting while walking as an aid for thinking: Nietzsche said: 'All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking'.



- **Reflecting with others**

This can be done as a pair or in a group. First, decide on a topic you want to reflect on e.g. an upcoming project, reviewing a report, an important decision etc. Assign someone as the listener (the listener will also be the timekeeper). The listener's role is to listen attentively and with fascination for 10 minutes to the speaker's reflections on the given topic. If there are silences, that's fine too. The roles then swap.